

Board launches new initiative

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board (SBCoWIB), an organization charged with developing a competitive workforce and a strong economy, is launching a new sector initiative.

SBCoWIB is inviting goods movement sector employers to attend a focus group on May 17 to share the workforce challenges faced by the expanding industry.

The logistics industry is one of the key industries in San Bernardino County, providing more than 277,200 individuals with jobs, and is projected to increase by 36 percent by the year 2012.

SBCoWIB officials are hoping that this meeting will hopefully lead to a development of a strategy to develop a workforce that will be ready to fill the need for workers through the development and funding of training programs and key partnerships between business, education and other groups.

"We are looking for eight to 10 companies in the goods movement sector to attend our focus group and provide us with information on their workforce needs," said Barbara Halsey, director of the board. "The focus group will help us to better understand what their workforce challenges are and to develop programs that will generate a positive impact in the community."

SBCoWIB will use the gathered information in the focus group to determine where it can invest funding under a customized training project that could result in a positive effect on the community and logistics companies throughout the county.

The board recently launched

an Advanced Manufacturing Training program after it had great success with its Nurses Workforce Initiative, which concluded in December of 2005. The Advanced Manufacturing Training assists manufacturing companies by upgrading the skill level of its current employees. The program will not only replace the aging workers, but also create a supply of local skilled workers.

"We have had a tremendous impact on the manufacturing industry through the creation of our Advanced Manufacturing Training program," said Halsey. "Our job is to foresee the work-

force needs of the industries that fuel our economy. We establish connections with the education, business, government and other entities to create solutions to develop a workforce that will keep these companies in our county and competitive."

Companies interested in participating in the logistics industry focus group should contact the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board at 388-4389.